The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Outlawing the Outlaws

LESS than four years ago, in March, 1947, the nation was still suffering from the wartime paper shortage. The *Daily Worker* was one of the publications hit by it. For a short time that winter it looked as if the *Worker* might have to suspend publication temporarily. But the New York *Times* came to the *Worker's* rescue. The foremost capitalist paper in the country dipped into its resources and offered the foremost Communist publication enough newsprint to carry on.

It was not a matter of personal friendships at the time, nor a sheer business deal. For the *Times* it was a matter of principle. Perhaps for the dialectical materialists accepting the offer principle was involved too. The *Times* was proud of its generosity and the liberal spirit behind its gift. The editors said so. For the *Worker* it might have been one small, gratifying example of how Communism can benefit from the conscientiousness of democratic toleration. But popularly the incident was heralded as a small triumph for liberal thought and the American way. All the Communists seemed to get out of it was 16 tons of newsprint stock.

On August 13 of this year, the *Times,* editorially considering the future of the Communist Party, was not so sure about the *Worker's* right to carry on:

> It was, we believe, President MacCracken who advised the girls in a graduating class at Vassar to "keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out." In our pursuit of the true essence of freedom at a time like this we find ourselves much in danger of having it happen to us.

Should the Communist Party be outlawed in the United States? It would be easy if the issues were as clear and simple as the *Times* apparently saw them in 1947. Then one could quote the Voltairean dictum about fighting to the death for your right to say it, and that would be that. If Communism were merely an idea that people think, one could write wisely that no one can effectively legislate against ideas, and let it go at that.

But Communism here, in this country, at this time is more than an idea. It is a conspiracy against this government, this people, this way of life. It is dedicated not only to persuasion but to direct, revolutionary action. The presence of the Communist Party, as this group of conspirators is called, may some day—and perhaps soon—mean serious sabotage, disastrous treason and fifth-column destruction throughout the United States.

In the case of the Communist Party the question is not one of a group's right to think as it chooses but of an association of enemy agents' right to act as they choose.

Dealing with enemy action is a practical question. It may perhaps better serve the interests of the United States for the Party to keep its legal status; it may be a wiser maneuver in the cold war to outlaw the Party. That is a matter to be decided on political, psychological and altogether pragmatic grounds. But whatever is done, it should be made clear that it is not really as a political party or an idea that the CP is being dealt with, but as a clear and present danger in the form of an enemy-directed conspiracy.

Dealing with what even purports to be a political party is a touchy business. There is the danger we run of setting a bad precedent in handling minority groups. It is of paramount importance, for this reason, that in all future dealings with the Communist Party it be described for what it is now unmistakably known to be.

Exploited

THE complexity and expanse of the American economic system are brought home in a rather oblique way by current testimony on the inhuman conditions under which certain Puerto Ricans and

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• NEXT WEEK •

In "Machines and Men," ANTHONY STANDEN, author of *Science Is a Sacred Cow,* discusses the objectives of the modern scientist and the good of man.

"The scientist feels that he has to examine man as he would be examined by a visitor from another planet, an intelligent creature, but one totally devoid of empathy with human beings. With this objective viewpoint, the speech can be detected but not the concepts or the mental processes behind the speech—the communication rather than the ideas communicated."

Mexicans are employed here. The evidence is of the sort to provoke the most vigorous civic protest. Yet the individual citizen can do nothing more than attempt to agitate in an atmosphere already charged with clamor. Suppose he attempts direct action. He learns that thousands of Puerto Ricans are being shamefully exploited in Michigan sugar beet fields, or that Mexicans are suffering similar indignities in Arizona cotton fields or on food ranches in California. Would he bring the slightest pressure to bear by giving up sugar, cotton shirts, tomato salads or citrus fruits? Considering our vast complexus such personal boycotts would simply be beating the air.

Yet the conditions reported are flagrant. The ACTU *Wage Earner* reports from Detroit that many of the 5,000 Puerto Ricans, who are flown to harvest sugar beets in the Saginaw area every year, have inadequate shelter and sanitary facilities. Work contracts are of indefinite duration. The men themselves are often uncertain whether they are paid on an hourly or acreage basis. They live on small advances from the employer until their term of work nears its end.

Out West the situation is similar, if on an appropriately larger scale, according to current hearings before the President's Commission on Migratory Labor. In Arizona the operation is mass-production of cotton. It is alleged that during the harvest season regional agents get orders from Washington (thanks to powerful lobbies) not to deport Mexicans who are in the country illegally. The reason is that even in these days Mexicans can be found who will work for 20 cents an hour.

In California itself illegal practices flourish in grandiose proportions. There are over 2,500 illicit, unlicensed labor contractors, who have little overhead and no compunction about such items as workmen's insurance. Some of them ply the Mexicans they so profitably farm out with liquor, women and narcotics; these harvesters are also poorly housed and charged exorbitant rates for inferior food. Many of them are likewise hazy about the terms of their work contracts and a high proportion are in the country illegally. In California their wages, while they work, range from $5 to $25 per week.

Several "justifications" for all this were brought out at the Commission's hearings. The basic contention is that native farm labor refuses to engage in such arduous "stoop" work. Then the argument continues that if these Mexicans

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were decently paid, they would blow the money on the same come-ons that the contractors used to recruit them. Some employers had the effrontery to maintain that if Mexican farm laborers had the gumption they had had when they arrived penniless in California, these laborers could eventually acquire their own farmlands.

But enough. How can we remedy the undeniable fact that thousands of these men—and families—are preyed upon, abused, underpaid, exploited and abandoned? Since a consumer boycott is impossible, the first responsibility would seem to be a local one. The enactment and enforcement of adequate local, county and state regulations on labor contracts and on working and living conditions is one tack. Joint employer responsibility for slack employment periods might also be required by law. But in view of the past records of the counties and states involved, this would seem more and more to be a situation demanding federal regulation and enforcement. Production here is primarily for interstate trade; and the relationship between the United States and other nations and dependencies is involved. Here is a seamy sector in the national picture which it is perilous to neglect.

The Burden of the Bomb

IT WAS inevitable that some people were going to suggest using the atom bomb in Korea. The whole thing, to a certain kind of mind, seems so easy, as it may have seemed when the decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima was made. Then it was said that a million American lives were saved and probably countless numbers of Japanese. When things go badly for us in Korea (or anywhere else) from now on, there are sure to be demands that we use the bomb to clean up the mess, cut out the nonsense and get home as soon as we can. It happened during this first setback for American armed might, and it will probably happen again.

When things get rough, the bomb will always be there in the background—the quick solution—and there will always be men around to ask why it isn't used. Until one day people like this—maybe they are in Russia as well as here—will have their way, and then the atomic war the whole world fears will be unleashed.

After the Japanese surrender it seemed that we had made ourselves clear about the bomb. It was generally understood then that the US would never be the first to use it again. The world was told that it had nothing to fear from us.

Perhaps that is the way things still are. It may be that there is a military value in our present official silence on the subject; as long as no man knows when the hour striketh, or *if* it will, we have a worthwhile psychological advantage. Anyway it is a long time since an authorized American has told the world that we will not be the first to use the bomb. And in the meantime the Communists have been piling up millions of signatures for the Stockholm Appeal.

If sheer military tactics were the only thing that mattered, then our silence might be wise and well chosen. We could keep them guessing. But there is more to this war than the military. World opinion is very much involved. And the time has come when even the friends of America feel that they need assurance.

It is something about which we have to make up our minds. We are going to have to live with the bomb in our possession. There will arise from time to time the temptation to use it. We have to decide once and for all whether we repudiate its use in all cases except as retaliation for bombs from the east. If we do, as we once led the world to believe, then we should say so in no uncertain terms. Until we do, many people may think that they have reason to fear us, too.

Antipathy in Asia

IT IS DIFFICULT for Americans to understand why we are so unpopular in Asia. In the Philippines we enabled the islanders to achieve their political independence; that was our one colonial possession of any size in the Far East. We consistently refused to recognize the Japanese conquest of Manchuria and our stubborn opposition to further Japanese inroads in China led directly to the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was largely through American efforts in the UN that Indonesia secured independence from the Dutch. Thousands of American soldiers and marines are now risking their very lives to defend, in the name of the UN, the Republic of South Korea. Moreover, this country has been the instigator of, and chief contributor to, Point IV plans for the undeveloped portions of the globe. Yet Robert Trumbull reports to the New York *Times* from New Delhi that "anti-United States feeling in India never has been so widespread as it is now."

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Part of this antipathy is ascribed to the destruction of Korean towns and villages by bombs and flame—and the fact that Americans are killing Asiatics. Somehow or other, despite a comparatively good record in the Far East, the United States has inherited the traditional native dislike of the Western Powers. The people of India and other Asiatic countries, being less conscious of communism than they are of imperialism (they do not yet seem to recognize any identity between the two) have little gratitude for whatever we are doing to defend them. They prefer to let history take its course, whatever that course may be, than to take sides between the USSR and the USA.

Along with such deep-seated prejudices and traditional political quiescence go a growing desire for national self-realization and dissatisfaction with Asia's extreme poverty and subjection to ardous hand labor.

Originally our stand in Korea was virtually without regional significance; it was to give notice to the Russians and to the world that we would countenance no further aggression. But inevitably the Korean war has involved us more and more directly in the fate of the Far East. If we succeed in maintaining our bridgehead and more and more contingents of Eastern peoples join the UN forces there, the people of India may come to see why towns have to be destroyed and people killed.

Meanwhile we must begin almost from scratch (both as to channels and ideas) to explain American objectives in Eastern terms. When even today the well-informed Mr. Nehru expresses little confidence in the possibilities of the Point IV program, it may well be imagined how far we are now from reaching the Indian masses. We have a mandate from the UN for armed action; we have wealth and know-how to place at Asia's disposal; we have an explainable tradition of live and let-live and of encouraging national self-determination. But we can lose the battle for Asia, even if ultimately victorious in the field, unless we perform consistently and effectively there as propagandists for what we believe in.

Invitations

TODAY, as the Soviets' red star ascends the heavens, it is only with difficulty and with a certain sense of astonishment that one recalls that as late as 1918, after the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, the Russian state lay prostrate and virtually powerless. The Bolsheviks had on their hands then a country suffering from a severe case of economic paralysis, over which the shrewd and angry revolutionists, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and Bukharin, brooded and bickered.

Their trouble was that industrial production from the formerly capitalist factories was down to a trickle and as a consequence the city proletariat, whose revolution this was, found themselves with few products to exchange for the food raised by Russia's vast, predominately peasant population. To get Russia's economic blood flowing again somebody had to revive industry. It was, of course, the Stalinists who, in the ensuing Party infighting, eventually accomplished this revival; then, stepping over the bodies of their slaughtered comrades, they proceeded to get things rolling in earnest.

This, no doubt, is an experience that the Stalinists remember well. And they may, right now, have good reason to remember it. On a greatly expanded scale, the Soviet empire now is confronted with an ever-growing peasant population in Asia to be supplied by the still-deficient Russian industrial works. This situation is just one of those internal "tensions" that the West keeps hoping will bring the Soviet world to its knees, again the victim of creeping economic paralysis.

By and large, the great industrial plants of the world are still outside the Russian orbit. But on both of Russia's flanks, East and West, lie the industrial prizes of the Orient and of Europe: Japan and Germany. These are the coveted objectives of Russian policy in Asia and Europe. With either or both of them harnessed to the Soviet system, Russia could hope to satisfy her increasing internal need for industrial goods and, at the same time, she would be able to solidify the world revolution of the proletariat, all the while approaching the heights of her vaulting ambition.

In defense against all this, we have, at the moment, what amounts to a military vacuum in both Germany and Japan. We spend our time studiously debating whether or not to recruit Germans and Japanese in their own, and our, defense and so far the negative keeps winning every debate. The troops we have today in both countries are nothing much better than MP details.

What we are doing is inviting another Korea in both Germany and Japan. Which is to say, we are inviting World War III.

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Reaching the Poorest

The priest should be set apart but not isolated.

By M. R. LOEW

DISREGARDING fine distinctions, it seems possible to trace three great periods in the history of the Church.

In the earliest times, the Church, lacking power and influence, was unable to take up any stand on the general social problems then current: turning aside from the field of theory, she nevertheless introduced — through the institution of deacons — various charitable services into the daily social life of that time: collections for the poor, hospitality to strangers, to social inferiors, etc. The Catholic epistles, particularly the epistle to Diognetus, are sufficient proof.

These humble activities multiplied in the Middle Ages: right of asylum, ransoming of captives, construction of bridges, land cultivation, manufacturing; all helped to produce a balance between the economic life of a region and that of its inhabitants. Every convent or ecclesiastical college was at one and the same time an apostolic center and a center of civilization: the cultivation of soil and spirit went hand in hand.

The Church, grown strong and influential, and now able to turn to more general considerations, including questions of social doctrine, felt no less bound to intervene on this level too.

At the present time, the Church enjoys greater authority and power than she ever possessed in her early history; consequently, she has the duty of acting on the general plane: she cannot, without betrayal, remain "as if she neither saw nor understood" (Pius XII, Pentecost Message, 1941), and when she sees that "the Christian life has become practically impossible for the great mass of the people" (Pius XII, ibid.), she must not hesitate to take up her stand against governments.

But—and here is the whole tragedy—unlike the Church of the Middle Ages, the Church today has lost the affection and the attention of the common people. They, on their side, ask her by what right she claims to interfere with and direct from above the spiritual and moral life of men with whom she is no longer involved in the everyday events of life, the daily task of bread-winning.

It seems desirable then, in fact imperative, that the Church should manifest herself to the people in her true role, entering into the entire daily life of the masses, flesh-and-blood workers—not in doctrinal matters alone, but in all the practical details of day-to-day living: labor, contracting, wages, sustenance, lodging, etc.

In thus ensuring that "Providence is placed within reach of the weak and needy," the Church has no thought of taking over governing or administrative functions from the proper authorities; she is simply bent on once more becoming the leaven which, closely mingled with the dough, causes the whole loaf to rise and not merely a few portions destined for the tables of the ruling class or the élite.

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THE Church has indeed never ceased rendering this material aid: witness her orphanages, welfare centers, crèches, day nurseries, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the nursing orders. But this is precisely the point: the form of these charities has scarcely changed for several centuries, and many others which used to exist have perished through lack of adaptation.

Those which have survived are the peculiarly feminine works of charity, but those formerly the province of knights, bishops, abbots or monks have disappeared: right of asylum, ransom of prisoners, bridge-building, the "Truce of God," the rendering of justice to the poor, strength placed at the service of the oppressed, in short, everything which could be called the man's part in the works of mercy has lapsed, owing to failure of adaptation to new human needs.

Would this be a case of unlawful intervention in temporal affairs? No, for it is a question here of helping people in the field of those daily human actions on which their salvation depends. If the Church is bound to teach men detachment from material possessions, she is no less bound to see that all creatures have their place in the created order, with the possession of that vital minimum of personal and domestic property that God has assigned to each, to enable him to accomplish his destiny.

If these premises are granted, what are the

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practical obstacles which at the present time combine to hinder the civilizing influence of the Church and its true apostolate? What constitutes the modern barricade between the people and God?

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FIRST and foremost, the conviction that the Church is identified with the rich, the employer class, the powerful, the government. Just as nothing — not all the balance-sheets in the world—will persuade the worker that the firm which employs him doesn't make enormous profits, or move him from his conviction that the whole system needs reorganizing, so, too, the people will not believe that the Church is the home of the poor, that it is harder for the rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, that the first beatitude is that of the poor and the humble. They will never believe this if things do not change, if they do not see the Church welcoming the worker, encouraging, defending, protecting him, if the representatives of the Church do not concern themselves with the texture of his life.

In the eyes of the people, the priest is a man not of life but of death, the man who appears between the hearse and the bosses at big funerals —"chief undertaker's assistant" they say; and indeed the church sacristies, covered with notices and placards recalling the formal and administrative side of the actions of worship, are not calculated to give them any other notion.

Going one day into an alley which I had never previously entered, I met a woman rinsing her washing at the well. As I passed, I read such consternation on her face that I stopped: "Why, what's happened, madam? Has there been an accident?" The answer came in a burst of apprehension: "What have you come here for? Who's dying?"

Have we still ears to hear what the common people are saying?

So the first obstacle to conquer is the fact that in the Church, secular and regular clergy—even when they are personally poor — live in the rhythm of the bourgeois classes: if one is asked with which side their lot is cast, one is forced to reply that it is with the well-to-do, the settled, the respectable classes, and in no sense with the poor, the workers, the proletariat. Even when their poverty is quite genuine, it lacks the dynamic aspect which Saint Francis and Saint Dominic gave it. The monks no longer look like men who have chosen to be beggars, as was intended by the founders of the great apostolic orders; on the contrary, appearances often support those who reproach the men of the Church with living by bourgeois standards.

Some nursing nuns settled in the midst of an exclusively working-class population, in a central industrial town. Enthusiastically welcomed, when the first flutter caused by their arrival had died down, they became aware of a certain uneasiness: "Look at the potatoes they get in, and the coal . . ." they heard people whisper. Yet this was an excellent community, truly self-sacrificing, poor and fervent; but there were twelve of them, and this number necessitated a measure of organization which, allied to the habitual foresight of nuns, resulted in their accumulating "riches" in the midst of the workers.

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THE second obstacle is the isolation of the priest. One of the characteristics of the proletariat, as we have seen, is that they do not mingle with other classes: the priests live neither in the working-class flats nor in cheap lodgings, and their contacts with their clients are of a purely "professional" nature, quite different from that state of affairs still existing in the villages, where everyone knows everyone else.

Consequently, the priest is no longer aware of what goes on around him.

It will be said that the JOC, the working-class movements, have their chaplains, and this is true; but they are not practically, concretely caught up in the web of the workers' daily existence, the battle for a living. Many priests have as much right as anyone to call themselves members of the French community, since they have won their *croix de guerre* at the cost of their blood, or endured imprisonment; but they have a further task: they must win the right to a *communauté de destin* with the masses.

Less than ever, of course, would this mean a diminution of their priestly character: in some faint imitation of God Himself, they will be separate and inaccessible, and yet immanent to the actions of all. The priest must be a man apart yes, but not, as he is today, a man isolated from his fellows. This is all-important.

In their childhood, certain priests have known what it was to go barefoot and to have their heads smacked. But they often seem to forget. The people sense this, and they say: "Oh well, what can you expect? They shut them up when they're about ten, stuff 'em with books, turn them into walking brains, and that's the finish of them."

They find they have forgotten how to talk the language of the workers; nor is it a question of using "bad words" (although many of these have lost all their unsavory significance in these milieux)—but words the people understand, "the words which aren't in the dictionary," as one good fellow put it—the kind, after all, which Jesus Himself made use of in the Gospel. "The priest is like the welfare assistant—he gives a heap of explanations and when he's finished you haven't understood a word."

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True, the priest cannot live in every courtyard at once, in all the sub-divisions of his parish, in each sordid alley. But let him go and live in one of the poorest, in the worst part of his district, and immediately a great barrier crumbles: by the mere fact that people get to know him personally before they see him act, many prejudices disappear.

To be sure, the priest is a consecrated man, and as such a certain mystery hovers about him; but today the mystery that surrounds the priest is false. It proceeds from the fact that many priests, even the impeccable, build the walls of their private lives too high.

How can you go on hating a man who lives right under your eyes—when you pass him on the same staircase, when you hear him switch off his light a little later in the evening, when his alarm rings a little earlier in the morning than the other neighbors'?

"He's not stuck-up, not scared of getting his hands dirty — he's not ashamed of living like us. . . ." Ah, if only we realized all the silent desolation and reproach contained in that further definition of a priest: "The man with white hands."

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WHEN the priest has got down among the people, he will soon be invited to enter their homes as a friend. He knows then that he must, without being timid, always remain very humble. There is no question of shedding his cassock or habit—on the contrary; but these have ceased to be a uniform denoting him to be a man apart, a man who has lost all capacity for affection, a dried-up insensible being.

It is then that trust begins to grow, that great recompense of the man who has given himself unreservedly to the common people. For him, the people's love and trust are not stinted, for the people love to love.

But the thing which they demand in return, and demand ruthlessly, is love. The present separation between priest and people is a gulf that a thousand bridges will not suffice to span without love.

Nor can this love be merely academic. When a man loves, he shows it, and the proof here must be the fact of living together, experiencing the same joys and the same sorrows throughout all the vicissitudes of daily life.

Ultimately it is the heart that matters, but the heart must educate itself, hold its classes and studies in the very midst of the common people: and it is here that it must always beat.

Fundamentally, what the people ask of the Church is the Gospel, and of the priest a life lived according to the Gospel. When they go to church, they see any amount of candles, statues, vestments, ceremonies—but what of the Gospel, where is that to be found? The Gospel is love, and Love is no longer loved, no longer valued. The proletarian masses do not want us to come among them out of curiosity or for the getting or giving of money; if they have a horror of the word charity, they have a thirst for the thing itself—for charity, which is no ordinary charity, but love accompanied by great reverence for the one loved. Isn't this the whole tragedy of paternalism, whether it come from the employer or the priest, that it claims to be founded on love but forgets to accord this preliminary and indispensable reverence?

"Little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue but in deed and in truth. . . . The Father desires true worshippers in spirit and in truth. . . ."

In spiritu et veritate, that is, with tenacity of soul and sincerity of heart. We cannot remain indifferent before the common people; men die just as surely of hunger in certain districts of our towns as they would in the middle of the Sahara; they are as completely ignorant of Christ and His Church here as in the remotest regions of the mission lands. Furthermore, their view of reality is blocked; a wall separates Christians and non-Christians, priests and faithful, rich and poor, intellectuals and manual workers, bourgeois and proletarian.

So a fundamental renewal is needed of human and *naturally supernatural* contacts; what we need is not administrative feats or imposing edifices, but action which will permit the charity of Christ to penetrate into lives darker than the slums which conceal them. For that, there is one basic, all-important condition: that we live with these people as missionaries, sharing their common lot with all that that involves: identical material conditions, inter-dependent fortunes, the being happy and miserable together.

The proletarian masses must rediscover the priest first and foremost as a friend, a Christian who loves them without reserve because he has become little like themselves, who loves them with the pure love of Christ, with that freshness and simplicity which the Lord Jesus Himself would wish, and which so impregnate the Catholic epistles. Let them sense that there is something else about him, a sacerdotal character which sets him apart, perhaps, yet does not isolate him; let them find in him a defender against injustice, a helping hand when the burden of daily life becomes too heavy — someone, to put it simply, whom they can unfailingly count on.

Will this close conjunction of the civilizing and apostolic role in the priest bear fruit? Experience alone will enable us to judge. It is likely that it will result both in shy, unexpected friendships and in lively opposition. But would not that be a favorable sign?

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FROM ENGLAND

Victorian America

THIS COLUMN is supposed to be concerned primarily with Great Britain and her people. This month I devote it to some light reflections on an aspect of Americans as seen by some English people. So it remains indirectly as much about us as about you.

In a long discussion of Harold Stannard's *The Two Constitutions* and Felix Morley's *The Power in the People,* an English reviewer, examining American origins and development, came to the conclusion that the term "Victorianism" is a suitable one for the American scene today.

The writer of course does not mean by this that "'The American Way' is merely that of Great Britain three generations back"— he repudiates such a false conclusion very firmly. But the United States today, like the England of Victoria, is a product of Protestantism and Puritanism, of individualism and enterprise, of vast opportunity seized with both hands, of leadership of the world in the techniques of production and distribution, of determination "at all costs to safeguard the human individual in his fundamental, pre-social, ethical freedoms against no matter how great a Social Good," of an idealism that sets the value of material things very high. There are other factors, no less important, that are not in common, and the resulting phenomena and problems differ widely as between twentieth-century America and nineteenth-century England; but there are also points of resemblance, important and not so important.

This idea of the "Victorianism" of the United States seems to explain a number of things that surprise the English visitor: mostly minor things perhaps, but in the ordinary living of everyday life small things can take on the significance of intrinsically far more weighty matters. How often English men and women find, from time to time, that the United States strikes them in a curious and elusive way as being "old-fashioned." It's the last thing they expect to find. But like causes are apt to produce like effects. Exuberance, for example.

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THE VICTORIANS in England were exuberant, in their staid and solid way; the Americans, less staidly, are still exuberant after two world wars. Having money and sentiment as well as sober high spirits, the Victorians set up the Albert Memorial in London. A thing like that could not be built in England today, even if we had the money; but it might happen in America. If you can find a "mosque," complete with minaret, in Montana (and you can) you may expect to find anything. That "mosque" is not like St. Nicholas's church in Chicago, built by immigrants of a certain nationality for certain religious rites: it was built, I believe, by the Shriners, and is now the city hall. Sheer exuberance; and ignorance of—or at any rate disregard for—the fitness of things. Strange buildings of that kind can be found all over the United States (that "Stones of Venice" picture-gallery in a Midwestern city), many of them quite new, side by side with those excellent skyscrapers and brick boxes. The Albert Memorial is not our only one either.

This exuberance goes with a certain self-satisfied ostentation of wealth, not perhaps so much personal as municipal and public; paralleled personally by pride in a rather over-padded comfort, unwillingness to use the hand or a simple device if an inconvenient gadget can be substituted, and the estimating and emulation of the Joneses by their material possessions. This has often been said before, and sounds none the less rude for that; but these things are really simply human. And some of the forms they take in the US are rather reminiscent of the Crystal Palace, the Victorian's excessive respect for mechanics, and his heavy gold watch-chain.

Mr. Robert Ruark has declared, "I say boastfully that the American male is the cleanest, neatest, most tastefully dressed he-creature in the world." But what about the clothes of American children, especially little girls? There is plenty of exuberance in them. Those bows, those ribbons, those flounces: I was always expecting to come upon a child in ankle-length drawers, pulled tight above her feet and tastefully edged with lace (or should it be tatting?). After reading Margaret Halsey's *With Malice Towards Some*—an excellent book, about which almost my only complaint as an Englishman was that there was not enough malice—I was disappointed with American women's clothes. Here I am being much too rash, and there is no question of Victorianism—except in the hats. Those seemed to me distinctly Victorian, not of course in their actual forms, but in the taste that designed and chose them.

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OR THE matter of gentility, in its ironical sense. I know well enough that the "gentility" of one society may be the plain good manners of another, and I'm not finding fault with anything or anybody. I'm simply saying that it seems to me that certain things in American life are curiously reminiscent of Victorian England, and I hope I am not so impious as to scorn all the ways of my parents and grandparents. Indeed, I am far more inclined "to regard Aunt Jemima as a sacred rather than a ridiculous figure," as Christopher Dawson so nicely put it. So if I say a Victorian refinement is still noticeable in America I'm approving the principle, if not all applications of it.

Here I am thinking particularly of speech. The word "smell," for example, as a substantive seems in the United States to have the taint of vulgarity that in England fifty years ago attached to "stink;" whereas in England today "odour" may almost be said to stink of affectation. Or again, I was once warned by an American, young enough to be my son, not to be shocked at the picturesque ("he-man") strength of language I should hear

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in his country. As I have both worked in London's east-end and been a soldier, my ears are not overly dainty, and I asked him to condescend to particulars. Almost blushing, and raising his voice to cracking pitch to drown a passing trolley, he brought out the word "lousy"—an epithet as much in use in my country as in his and no more likely to cause distress. I may add in passing that I think one is liable to hear more really bad language in public in England than in the States.

And what about the word "woman"? Americans seem to be shy of using it, except as a general term and in certain public notices. And yet woman, and not lady, is the correlative of man. In England a free use of "lady" smacks rather of Victorian gentility, of "feudal titles"—or of public notices. We speak of "charladies," but facetiously. On the other hand I think you are free from most of our folk-lore about "gentleman," though that is a matter of content rather than of the word itself.

From euphemism to euphuism, not literary, but in the sense of general over-decoration and fussy ornamentation, to be seen in many surroundings, public and domestic. One example will suffice. It was in an American home that I saw the legs of a dining-table draped with floral fabric. I am not old enough to remember such a fashion in my own country, but have often heard it referred to, generally as an example of our grandparents' squeamishness about legs. That I am sure is a slander: it is just another manifestation of that exuberance that produced Swinburne, long whiskers and the Great Exhibition of 1850.

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AND raising my eyes from my desk they light on a different example of the same sort of thing. A book, a solid learned book, produced in 1946 by an American university press, its back plastered with useless squiggly ornament. And how many more there are on my shelves, all published during the past twenty years.

I started this piece with a serious quotation. When I get around to table-legs I may well be accused of frivolity. Certainly I could have attended to more serious matters which seem old-fashioned to a visitor from England. For instance, the incredibly outraged and stubborn attitude of some employers of labor towards trade unions. Or the belief that huge-scale manufacturing and commercial organizations are good for everybody concerned, and can only get bigger and better.

And here I have an idea. I turn up THE COMMONWEAL of November 4, 1949 and re-read Father H. A. Reinhold's article called "The Cultural Lag." He was concerned there mainly with American Catholics, but not exclusively. Have I too been writing, with a wider reference and at a lower level, about a "cultural lag"? It looks rather as if have. It was quite unintentional.

(A final note, taken from an English newspaper: "Three elderly sisters of Washington, D. C., have written asking for census forms to be posted to them. They feel that neighbors will talk if a male census-taker is seen entering their home.")

DONALD ATTWATER.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Patriotic Anarchy

BETWEEN the right to work, and the right to hold office in a labor union there is as wide a separation as that between peace and war. They have their origin and their roots in different soil. With however much clarity, I wrote about the latter in the last column and do not propose to traverse that road again. But, at the risk of tedium, I want once more to insist that we, in the United States at least, have made work not an obligation—God appears to have taken care of that in Eden—but a right. In doing that we have not merely given recognition to the fact that work is a necessity, the psychological as well as the economic satisfaction of a need, but that it is a way of life. For most of us, men at any rate as distinguished from women, it is the only way of life.

So far as I know *le droit du travail* was first publicly proclaimed by the proletariat in the French revolution of 1848. They gave to their claim a political expression; and governments have risen and fallen around this claim, in Western society, ever since. It is so clear as to be beyond discussion that no modern government could continue to function, as did that of Van Buren, which did not organize its full strength to combat a depression.

That all of this is true none know better, or should know, than those who are in labor unions. For the right to work was not recognized, was constantly in jeopardy and done violence to, so long as men could not voluntarily associate in their shops. Labor was a commodity long after the public declaration to the contrary, which now we read abashed, contained in the Clayton Act of 1914. One of the reasons for the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Law was that "the individual unorganized worker is commonly helpless to exercise actual liberty of contract, and thereby to obtain acceptable terms and conditions of employment." Labor, rightly, was not satisfied until the Wagner Act made the right to join unions a public and enforceable declaration, because in their absence men had to be excessively submissive to get or to hold a job. There are many reasons for the necessary existence of labor unions, and many are the reasons why men join them; but that through them their jobs shall be protected is not the least of these.

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THAT is why there is nausea, a taste of pennies in my mouth, when labor unions use their strength to do violence to men who have a right to work—when labor unions deny by force to their own, what against chicanery and violence, legislators and judges and wicked law was for years denied to themselves. That which was so perilously built up, by such length of sacrifice and loss

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of limb and very life, that which was built into the structure of law and of acceptance, that to which there are martyrs from Harlan County to Detroit, from Staten Island to San Francisco—the right of men to work, to think and to speak their thoughts, to have their just grievances heard and redressed, to an orderly procession and structure of their lives; that these should die in a day, be extinguished in a bloody violent hour, reason routed and passion supreme—this offends dignity and the things which decent men hold dear.

But the fact is that men have been mauled and beaten, ejected from plants, in one case dropped out of a four-story window, suspended from their unions and from their jobs, in auto plants from Los Angeles to Linden. The victims of this violence passed out the so-called Stockholm peace petition, others merely carried the *Daily Worker,* some passed leaflets urging "hands off Korea."

Obviously all words which are devised as propaganda have as their purpose the influencing of the minds of men. Equally obviously the Stockholm peace petition is more than a lie; it is a sanction to sabotage. It is patent that a pamphlet which is the product of the Communist party and which asks "hands off Korea" on the ground that the United States is the aggressor in a "banker's war," a "Wall Street war," an adventure in "capitalistic imperialism" is a lie. It is a deliberate and calculated distortion of the truth. When workers in a plant distribute such leaflets, either in the plant or outside its gates, they are clearly trying to change the minds of their fellow workers. Especially when these distributors are known Communists, such conduct easily and naturally inflame decent men. Resentment is swift and certain, and that is understandable. But decent men are men who act decently.

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I AM NOT persuaded that men do not have the right to pass out such leaflets outside of a shop. Whether they have a right to pass out this kind of literature, or any kind of literature, inside the plant seems to me wholly a matter to be decided by the company whose property it is. If there is such a thing as freedom of speech, and writing has long been held to be part of speech, then, surely, that freedom is never tested where there is unanimity of opinion. Freedom of speech meets its only test when opinions are expressed with which others disagree. I believe, with Justice Holmes, that "we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country."

But the judgment that the pamphlets condemning our action in Korea, by themselves, must not be distributed on the ground that such prohibition is needed "to save the country" is surely both a delicate and audacious judgment. I cannot be persuaded that the country is in so much danger, or that literature, even of such wicked character, makes it imperiled. But even if I am wrong, such a judgment, assuming as it does the right to prohibit such literature, can hardly be left to a labor union. My respect for many labor unions is great, but it does not run as far as that.

We cannot entrust our civil liberties to labor unions, nor assign to them—nor can they be allowed to assume—functions that belong exclusively to our government. That they should assign such functions to themselves, and execute them with primitive violence, is surely an exercise deserving our severe and instant condemnation.

I have always distrusted the argument that a proposed law should not be allowed to prevail because in adversely affecting John, some day Mary may be hurt by it. But to allow a labor union, inflamed by passion, to do violence to Communists, or to overlook it on the ground of patriotism, is really to invite its quietly sanctioned violence against Fenians, Baptists, Catholics, or anyone at all, given the heated circumstance, who is in disagreement at a given moment; be the disagreement real or fancied, long or short, trivial or grave. It is to substitute the savage for the civilized, and to submit liberty to the swift arbitration of the undisciplined and the strong.

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THAT Walter Reuther would be quick to condemn such conduct is not unexpected, but it is gratifying to be able to report it nonetheless. "Walking of alleged Communist party members out of plants," writes Mr. Reuther, "deprives individuals of their democratic rights and is the weapon of totalitarians themselves. It is not the weapon of democracy. We cannot defeat the Communists or the adherents of any form of totalitarianism by falling into the trap of their own tactics. . . . The best way to safeguard our union is to see to it that we ourselves observe all democratic procedures."

What Mr. Reuther always knew, one of his union members more difficultly discovered. With others, Frank Zaffina, a veteran of World War II, got together a posse for a "crusade against Communism." Outside the gates of the Los Angeles Chrysler plant his boys did violence suddenly to three men as they came out from work. When he discovered that one was, like himself, a navy veteran, and another a veteran of the South Pacific Air Force, Mr. Zaffina said, "I guess it isn't right to take the law into your own hands." As a nun used to say to me when I was a little, and recalcitrant, boy, "some can be taught while others must learn."

I find it difficult, however, to be fully satisfied with democratic procedures, alone. As in the UN, there is a distinction between matters which are procedural and matters of substance. One may do murder with the utmost politeness to his victim. And one may commit tyranny while paying punctilious obeisance to procedure, even to that which is technically democratic. I have in mind the conduct of the UAW-CIO local in Linden, New Jersey.

Four men, two of whom were physically ejected by their fellow workers, from the GM shop, for distributing "hands off Korea" leaflets, have been suspended by the local union. They have also been dismissed by the man-

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agement from their jobs pending a company investigation. The one action followed from the other.

Against two of the men, those charged with leaflet distribution, three members of the local union have brought charges of "subversion" in New Jersey's courts. With that action, at the moment, I am not concerned here. That is a private matter. But the action of the local union which led to the loss of their jobs, and the trial to be held by the local union against four members on the ground that their activities constitute "conduct unbecoming a union member," and are "activities detrimental to the local" seem to me to be unwarranted, and to arise out of a misconception, a perversion of the meaning and obligations of a labor union, as well as out of a feeling of patriotism more passionate than intelligent.

What this conduct amounts to is that, since the local union had adopted a resolution in support of President Truman's action in Korea, for a member to disagree with the policy of his union, and to express that disagreement is to put himself among the heretical. Therefore, the argument runs, he must be excommunicated. This is a proposition I cannot accept, and in ordinary times hardly anyone, I suppose, would quarrel with me. Now the case may be different.

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THE fact that we are at war does not lessen the gravity of what the Linden local is doing, nor does the principle which its action is corrupting remain any the less stained because the members involved are, or alleged to be, Communist. For either one of two things is mixed up in these charges: either these men are Communist, or they are following the Party line. But even if it could prove the former and establish the latter, a local union has no right to make either a crime. Crime is a legal thing, or it is nothing. If it is a legal matter then only that body which, alone, has the right to define crime has the right to punish it; and that body is the state. When local unions become the uninvited assistants of the state, nay, when they become bodies engaged in the gratuitous prosecution of what the state has not even yet nominated to the list of crimes, then local unions have lost sight of their function.

The presumption that those who are Communists will engage in sabotage is one rightly to be inferred by reasonable men. But sabotage is not involved here; at their trial these four will not have to plead to that indictment. And that is as it should be, since the charging and punishment of sabotage are functions which must properly be reserved to the state. Else all is anarchy and the rule of the mob.

I will acknowledge, as I must, that there is a difference between heresy and conspiracy. Such acknowledgment is implicit in every sentence of this essay. And I will admit that all of history shows that institutions which exist and function within society have always made rules about heresy and banned the heretic. I do not happen to think that the history of that procedure invites my approbation. But I am willing to state it and leave it at that. What I cannot leave is that conduct of unions which transcends both their purposes and their rights, no matter if pleasantly based on patriotic grounds.

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A LABOR union is an institution in which men organize themselves around a job and the conditions of that job. Recently the labor unions have reached out into what is called political action. The argument that the one action is related to the other is a persuasive one, nor do I quarrel with it. But it seems clear that men are entitled to their political opinions, and they must not be suppressed nor their expression die because the majority in a union has laid down official policy on politics. The action of the Linden local presupposes, whether it realizes it or not, that a man who supports Senator Taft becomes a political heretic, engages in "conduct unbecoming a union member," loses his membership and, often, his job. It presupposes that its official policies on all things harden into orthodoxy. It assumes, no matter how implicitly at present, that it has the right to make an official declaration against *The Nation, The New Republic,* THE COMMONWEAL or the Brooklyn *Tablet;* and that to distribute these magazines inside the plant or at its gates is *lese majeste*, to commit which is to forfeit rights in a union or in a job.

This is an indefensible thing and an affront to freedom, to advance which is among the origins and purposes of unions. It makes all men puppets since it destroys the independent character of their minds. It stifles all criticism, and thus destroys the right to oppose. It makes the majority a tyrant. It makes every shop and every union hall a prison house in which men must stay obedient and quiet. For if they do not, they look out of the windows on harsh prospects of little Siberias from Maine to California, to which their unyielding obedience to mind and conscience will, in poverty, have sentenced them.

Is it to this that the great labor unions have come? Little men in little unions or none, twenty years ago, by giant corporations made timorous because unspeakably unfree, hectored and spied upon and kept unbravely still, made and expected to await the crumbs from Dives' table—these have grown strong and great.

Now these, who asserted a job was a right, who said they came to raise the valleys, to level the mountains and to make straight the crooked paths, now these reach out, like all absolutists, to eliminate dissent and to exterminate dissenters, intensely active, faith dried up. "We had been so very powerful," said Edmund Burke, "and so very prosperous, that even the humblest of us were degraded into the vices and follies of kings. We lost all measure between means and ends; and our headlong desires became our politics and our morals." Lord Bryce says that the history of all governments consists in the repetition of a painful cycle from anarchy to tyranny and back again. It had not, till now, occurred to me that, in labor unions, movement in the cycle would be so swift, since I had forgotten that men do not take long to forget either history or their own origins.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

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The Screen

IF THE SUN EVER SETS

IF THAT day should ever come (the day that Hollywood worries about: when Television has taken over completely, and the present world's film capital is a ghost town) then the Library of Congress will be glad to have in its archives a print of *"Sunset Boulevard,"* the newest and best movie about Hollywood. Besides having one of the most symbolically clever titles ever to come out of Hollywood, "Sunset Boulevard" is so packed with other perfect symbols of American motion picture making that it is a wonder that there was room for any story to come through at all. But a story does come through; and a fascinating, although melodramatic, tale it is.

Charles Brackett, who gave the film its first-rate production, and Billy Wilder, whose direction excels in every department (this pair has startled audiences and won applause before with such films as "A Foreign Affair" and "The Lost Weekend") and D. M. Marshman, Jr., wrote the original screenplay for "Sunset Boulevard." And their script is as dramatically sensational and as satirically biting as a novel by Dickens; but it lacks the heart and warmth Dickens might have given it. They tell the story of a desperately-broke, young scriptwriter (who could represent Hollywood Present) and a middle-aged, faded movie queen of the silent days (Hollywood Past). The writer, an opportunist whose hack stuff is not selling too well, is by no means adverse to making a few fast bucks by rewriting a scenario of "Salome" which this former star has written with the hope that Cecil B. DeMille will direct her in it. So the writer goes to work for the once-famous Norma Desmond; he moves into her fantastic house on Sunset Boulevard; he stays to become her gigolo; and before this film comes to its theatrically staged and tragic finale, he falls in love with a girl of his own age and tastes the bitter fruit of his degrading situation.

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THIS is by no means a pleasant story, but its direction and script are so brilliant (at times too studiedly brilliant) and the character portrayals, with their flashes of ironic humor, are so disturbingly accurate that one cannot disregard the film's honesty—even in spite of its obvious melodrama. With a good movie like this, it is always difficult to say who should get most praise; but when the acting is as outstanding as it is throughout "Sunset Boulevard," praise must go to the producer and director as well as to the stars. The three leads give performances that stand up with Hollywood's best: Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond, a glamorous egomaniac living in the past, who refuses to stop her playacting (her impersonations of Chaplin and Bathing Beauties are wonderful) and whose life is so empty it is almost a travesty on living; William Holden as the young writer lured on by and then surfeited with caviar and champagne—a heel, no doubt, but with enough decency to turn away the young girl (Nancy Olson) he really cares for; Erich von Stroheim as Miss Desmond's butler and chauffeur dedicating his life to this star of stars whom he still idolizes—although he was the first of her three husbands and her former director.

Although these three people are the most important in the cast, "Sunset Boulevard" is unusually skillful in making an accumulation of minor roles add up to a revealing whole. Parts that are almost bit parts, some played by people playing themselves, help greatly to add to the picture of Hollywood: Cecil B. DeMille on a set at the Paramount Studio, Hedda Hopper in one very tense scene, Anna Q. Nilsson, H. B. Warner and Buster Keaton (showing their years and referred to by the writer as "the wax works") playing Bridge with Norma. Along with people "Sunset Boulevard" uses its Hollywood locale well—the obvious places as well as Miss Desmond's house, "the kind of a crazy house that crazy movie people built in the '20s" with *her* bedroom "the perfect set for a silent movie queen," and the living room with photographs of Norma (Gloria Swanson) everywhere, and the dance floor on which Valentino had done the tango.

As you watch "Sunset Boulevard" you actually believe that it is about people and places connected with movie making, complete with all the fabulous glitter. You see snatches of old Gloria Swanson movies, and although you realize that the actress is mad, you wonder if there isn't some truth to her madness when she screams: "I am big. It's the pictures that got small. They opened their big mouths and out came—talk!" I suspect that "Sunset Boulevard" will be liked most by people who really like movies; and on one point they will all agree: as long as Hollywood makes movies as good as this, the industry won't have to worry about television.

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THERE is another film this week, a documentary, about which I am most enthusiastic. It is *"Holy Year, 1950,"* and I suppose it could be called a travelogue —except for the fact that in its 40-some minutes length it succeeds in doing more than just showing you Rome with its churches, art treasures and people. Produced by Edmund Reek and directed by Anthony Muto, this well-made documentary actually captures the spirit of the Holy Year. There are beautiful and inspiring shots of the many pilgrims (including one couple who came from behind the Iron Curtain) and there are many exceedingly effective scenes in which the Pope is the central figure.

The film was started in production in May, 1949, when the Holy Father in a Papal Bull proclaimed the jubilee; and it shows that ceremony, many of the intensive preparations and many of the celebrations right up to the Feast of Corpus Christi. You may wonder why the film is being released now before the end of the Holy Year, but when you see it you realize that it already has enough good material to hold your interest from beginning to end; furthermore a sequel can be made later.

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And I hope the sequel will be as pleasing to the eye and ear as is this movie. The background music is sung by the Sistine Chapel Choir; and the narration is nicely read by Father Robert I. Gannon who understands that a sound track is an accompaniment and is not meant to steal from the visuals. I think "Holy Year, 1950" will interest both Catholics and non-Catholics, and will especially interest those who cannot go to Rome this year, those who are going and those who have been but could not see all the sights that this film offers. "Holy Year, 1950" will in fact interest everyone.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Of Note

Education for Rural Living

A SPECIAL release from the news bureau of St. Martin's College, which is conducted by the Benedictine monks at Olympia, Washington, tells of a new emphasis the school is placing on rural life.

> Church leaders for years have deplored the breakdown of Catholic rural strength in the United States. They have hit the fact that students have been trained away from rural life. They have long sought some means of combating this breakdown through collegiate courses. St. Martin's has taken up the challenge and is ready to do something about it. Thus St. Martin's becomes the only Catholic college in the country to offer courses in agriculture.
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> St. Martin's is going to offer these courses as part of its curriculum of liberal arts and sciences with the intention of so educating students coming from rural areas that they will be happy to continue to live in those areas after school—and at the same time be educated in the best traditions of Catholic liberal training.
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> This does not mean that St. Martin's is going to become an agricultural college, one to compete with state agriculture schools. It merely means that St. Martin's is ready to do something about the fact that students from rural areas find themselves less satisfied with their rural lot after graduation. St. Martin's is going to try to help these students realize the important role they can play in after-school life as liberally-educated Catholic men working and living in rural communities.
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> St. Martin's officials said that the college does not expect to develop specialists in agriculture. It still remains the principal objective of the college to give a good, Catholic liberal education. The college expects to give students coming to school from rural homes the conviction that they should return to these rural communities after college and there become leaders. The college curriculum hopes to convince these students they should return because there are distinct advantages there for good living and the establishment of excellent Christian families.
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> The agriculture program at St. Martin's is not a highly technicalized one. There is no vast farm acreage nor highly expensive specialized equipment. College officials explained, however, that they will draw on poultry and dairy farms and other similar agriculture enterprises from the surrounding territory for purposes of actual observation and research. Practicing farmers and personnel from agriculture extension offices will be called to augment the actual teaching on a part-time basis.
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> The agriculture program at St. Martin's will have a close tieup with forestry, engineering, business administration and rural sociology, with students majoring according to their interests. Always there will be retained the principal aim that the student shall be educated in a complete, liberal, Catholic manner. Then follows that link with an after-school career. The agriculture program hopes to help develop Catholic leaders in our rural communities.

Experimentation

IN A RECENT issue of the *Catholic Times of South Africa* (16 Keyes Avenue, Rosebank, Johannesburg) Father Finbar Synnott, O.P. writes on the subject of "Experiment with Evil." Here is an excerpt:

> Now, if any age ever was one of undisciplined experiment, it is ours. "Experience" and "experiment" are its words. It regards any attempt to restrain the making of every experiment, and the gaining of every experience, as an inhibition. It disregards the possibility of a Divine Revelation, or a positive order from the Creator of Man audible in his conscience, saying: "Thus far and no further." It maintains that we ourselves must find out by experiment what is good and evil. Is it too hard a saying to say that those of its scientists, psychologists and cultural leaders who do not, like Adam, know that they go too far, can only have the excuse St. Augustine allows to Eve: that they have not got the balance of mind to see their own limitations? They make passes at the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" and at the "tree of life," too. The mysterious "tree of life" that was in Eden was that by eating of which, as St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, the first humans would have "medicinally prevented all corruption" of their bodily life. It would not have given immortality, but the bodily support of immortality.
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> When, as now, a responsible scientist can give out that it may become difficult to die, on account of drugs discovered; when people experiment with the continuation of life through sex and tamper with it; when they say they must in honesty experiment with things that all history, even apart from

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Revelation, has called evil, such as incest, then it is clear that man is going out of his sphere. Indeed a morbid desire, and perhaps even more a morbid curiosity in sex matters is the obvious and immediate result of their unbalanced worship of their own power of experiment, just as self-consciousness about sex was the obvious and immediate result of the first sin of man. . . .

No age has ever been more sick with this morbidity than ours, whether it admits its own animalism or covers it up with the name of psychology and experiment. "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his power also and divinity, so that they are inexcusable." It is quite impossible that people who so rashly experiment with the very sources of their own life and being, which they did not give themselves, do not frequently realize that they are experimenting with something mysterious, to tamper with which is "out of order" for them, and evil.

This biological experimenting with evil is, however, as the more obvious, perhaps the less significant. For reputable scientists are now experimenting with atomic forces which, other reputable scientists are telling them, are not really controllable and may destroy, not only man, but the planet he lives on. It is always emphasized that the experiments have a positive value. And yet it is a fact that it took war, and the zeal for destroying the enemy, to bring the first results of the experiments. And now we hear of even more marvellous energies that may be released, some of which can only be used for destruction. Did the men who caused the first atomic explosion know if they could control it? Do they know now? Or are they continuing until they know by the feel of evil how far they may go and not go?

Maybe those who are playing with stellar energy will make the stars fall, and the final death of the human race will follow, as the first, from an act of proud curiosity. Man was made to use his intelligence, and he must experiment. But it is also true that he is not an intelligence only, but has warnings in conscience and even human feeling that must sometimes tell his intelligence it has gone far enough, and must now stop. Cardinal Newman remarked of a celebrated university, leader in experiments in his day, that what it lacked was the gift of Fear. It is this gift, not physical fear, but that which is the beginning of reverence and love, that this age needs if its lust for experiment and experience are not to bring death upon itself. Even if man's own experimentation is not, in the Providence of God, to be the occasion of his extinction, still it is becoming so threateningly near that it is worthwhile reconsidering all our zeal for experiment.

President versus Congress

By EDWARD LITTLEJOHN

IN A WORLD of deepening crisis, the contributions of political science appear increasingly arid. Against the impending doom, we are offered the socio-psychological method, which, carefully avoiding the distressingly unscientific insights of history and philosophy, proceeds on the assumption that human experience can be easily understood, provided it is first appropriately classified and indexed. Such is the approach of the latest publication of the Yale Institute of International Studies, *Congress and Foreign Policy*. [Robert A. Dahl. Harcourt. $4.] Here the subject is compressed into precise criteria, conditions, requirements and conclusions, neatly numbered or lettered "for schematic purposes," interspersed with tables and diagrams, and sprinkled with footnotes to define terms whose meaning is usually quite clear.

Thus we find that Congressmen have three critical sets of attitudes: "attitudes toward international violence; attitudes concerning collaboration of the United States with other nations or international organizations; and attitudes toward the domestic status quo." These may in turn be divided as follows: "the attitudes toward violence into pacifist (rejection of violence) and militant (acceptance of violence); attitudes toward collaboration into isolationist (rejection) and internationalist (acceptance); and attitudes toward the domestic status quo into reformist (rejection) and conservative (acceptance)." The author argues it would be tedious to explore all the permutations of these divisions, but he gives us three combinations just to show us he could do it. They are: "the pacifist-isolationist-reformist, the pacifist-internationalist-reformist, and the militant-internationalist-reformist."

To this analysis, I can only add that it is difficult to comment on the unintelligible. For I suggest that human affairs cannot be fitted to such rigid formulae. "Circumstances," Burke has written, "are infinite, are infinitely combined; are variable and transient; he who does not take them into consideration is not erroneous, but stark mad, . . . he is metaphysically mad." The contemporary student of political science reads volumes on the structure of the federal government, he is well informed on the budget process and personnel policies, he has studied state and local administrations. Possibly, he is familiar with "the planning process as it relates to national resources" or "the psycho-cultural origins of political attitudes." He has little sense of history, no knowledge of philosophy, and

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his reading of the great works of the human mind is negligible. "An economic civilization," wrote Henry Adams, "troubles itself about the universe much as a hive of honey bees troubles about the ocean, only as a region to be avoided." But where else is to be found the wisdom and judgment which alone can illumine facts with understanding. "Whatever the world thinks, he who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind and the summum bonum, may possibly make a thriving earthworm, but will most indubitably make a sorry patriot and a sorry statesman." So wrote Bishop Berkeley.

★

LET US, however, proceed to discuss some of the issues raised in the book. The process of formulating decisions in foreign policy, according to Mr. Dahl, must be judged by the extent to which it establishes policies based upon the preferences of citizens; by its success in facilitating agreement among citizens; and finally, by the appropriateness of the policy to the desired end. Responsible leadership, we are told, must reflect the preferences of the greatest number. Does such a criterion make any sense in the realistics of the political world? Are we to suppose that the average citizen has specific preferences on aid to Turkey, the Halibut Treaties, the Trade Agreements Act, or the International Bank; and if he does, the electoral process will not ensure that his Congressman will reflect his views on each of these issues. There is a rightful place for leadership in a free society and we should not be ashamed of it. Certainly, it is vital to provide for the widest political education, and it is important to establish wide areas of agreement on crucial issues. Nevertheless, eliciting consent rather than reflecting preferences more correctly describes an attainable democratic ideal. More often than not, it is a question of what the people will accept after suitable explanation and reasonable pressure.

> The problem, if not necessarily the solution of American Government in the twentieth century, is substantially that of England in the eighteenth. The great weapon of free government has misfired. Separation of powers between President and Congress has proved to be less productive of freedom than of conflict, patronage, inefficiency and irresponsibility.

One might wish that Mr. Dahl was always as lucid as in this apt description of the crucial issue of the American political system. But his remedies are hardly proportionate to the magnitude of the problem. Against the stark principle of suspicion, he places that of confidence. And to bridge the gap, he proposes the development of techniques for improving congressional competence in foreign affairs, greater collaboration with the executive in basic foreign policies, and a greater measure of party responsibility, disciplining both branches under a party council and an agreed program. But the effective development of

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these techniques presupposes the very confidence they are supposed to create, a state of mind continually inhibited by the separation of powers. Moreover, can we reasonably expect the President to submerge his great office in a council even of his own party, much less in that of the opposition party, should it be in control of Congress?

★

MR. DAHL dismisses the remedy of dissolution as political gadgetry—and imported at that, suggested by those who have misunderstood the British Constitution. But it may be that the suggestion deserves more than this cursory treatment. For the fact remains that the issues at home and abroad are too grave and insistent to risk the solutions likely to emerge from a process of constitutional tension. Inevitably, initiative must lie with the executive and the authority of government should come not so much from the detailed approval of every bill by the legislature, as from the mandate granted the party to govern in accordance with its platform and general principles. And this is the importance of the power of dissolution. It is not an obsolete instrument once intended to insure that the Cabinet had the confidence of the Commons, as Mr. Dahl seems to believe. Rather, it is the means by which a government no longer able to move with the initiative and confidence necessary to meet the enormous pressure of events, that is no longer able to govern, may refer the issue to the people, as events in the United Kingdom and Australia are likely soon to confirm.

The book emphasizes the urgency of developing effective party responsibility, of ensuring that parties represent consistent programs, and that, if elected, they are in a position to implement them. But it is doubtful whether this will emerge in a Congress whose term is rigidly fixed. It may be true that "for over half a century no Cabinet that began life with its party in control of the House [of Commons] has fallen because of a vote of no confidence," but the power of dissolution has strengthened the hands of party leaders and promoted the discipline upon which depends the maintenance of the government in power. There is a great incentive to party regularity when the fruits of office are at stake. And similarly, members are forced to present themselves to their constituencies under the party program which must be taken seriously, inasmuch as the winning party will be in a position to legislate it.

These are, of course, long-term issues; and it may rightly be argued that meanwhile we may at least do something along the lines suggested by the author to smooth, if not to resolve, the inherent conflicts between the legislative and executive branches. Nevertheless, too often we are content to drift along meeting the immediate problem, and then the next and the next. In these extraordinary times, survival may well depend on our ability to re-examine our assumptions and amongst them, those of a political science which has buried the misery and grandeur of man in tabulations, percentages and "factual data."

Books

Face of the Hero. Louis Falstein. Harcourt. $3.

IF Hell has a center it could be at the Laredo aerial gunnery school in mid-summer. If Heaven is on earth at times, it could have been at Laredo when the gunners wore their wings and sauntered around the field in their jaunty green flying suits.

You too can be an aviation cadet, providing you do not wash out and go to gunnery school at Laredo, Texas; Tyndall Field, Florida; Kingman, Arizona; Las Vegas, Nevada.

In all these places you get to know incessant heat, the clack of skeet-shot, the chatter of thirties, the thunder of fifties, the relentless moan of the bombers approaching, circling or dwindling.

You too could fly, if you were not a camp reporter gathering news in the air-conditioned bowling alley at Laredo—seeing the gunners come and go, writing little releases which appeared in the Kansas City *Star* or the Charlestown *News*.

> Sgt. Fred Cluney pinned on his bright new gunner's wings today after graduation ceremonies at Laredo, Texas. "This is the day I've been waiting for," he declared, before joining an operational training unit in El Paso.
>
> Sgt. Cluney, who hopes to slash at the Nazis from a ball turret, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cluney of 1740 Bunker Hill St. His brother Edward is a Petty Officer serving with the Navy, somewhere in the South Pacific."

The day he was waiting for. Yes, and if his aunt wore trousers, she would be his uncle.

Then at Lowry Field, later, where they pooled the returnee gunners, you took them to the Denver Press Club and helped them ease up with bourbon, gin, beer and all three mixed if necessary. (*Obscenity the Air Corps, obscenity all officers and all civilians, obscenity everything but us and those we like because of a smile, a drink, an embrace in the hallway.*)

"You're a writer. For Christ' sake write it all down. Tell our story, tell the whole obscenity story."

But you'd have to be a combat gunner to tell that story, to get behind the too-many missions and the too-many medals. To know the why of sobbing at midnight on the way back to the barracks—the tears and the profanity and the chambering—the vomiting at the Shirley-Savoy on Saturday night.

★

LOUIS FALSTEIN, an ex-combat gunner, has told this almost impossible story. Impossible, because it is difficult to make fictionally credible the feelings and the actions of men who flew the B-24's—those whooshy boxcars—and all combat airplanes over the guns of the enemy in broad daylight. It is almost impossible to ex-

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tract value and dedication out of men at whom the Nazi gunners have thrown everything but their chamber pots over incredible, nightmarish targets like Ploesti and Vienna.

Ernest Hemingway excepted, only an aerial combat man could write this story as it must be written—out of the looseness of his bowels and the stutter of his teeth. And only a writer with some kind of spiritual insight could hold it all together.

Those of us who have thought about writing a gunner's novel further recognize the complex technical problems. Once you have done a vivid, powerful, comprehensive job on one aerial combat mission—say the first of 50—what are you going to do with the other 49?

In Sergeant Ben Isaacs, the gentle, thirtyish American Jew with a steely dedication to the destruction of Fascism, we have Louis Falstein's answer to the problem of the short story material that must be sustained in a novel of at least three hundred pages.

Through Ben's eyes we see that the nightmare life of the heavy bombardment mission does not end with the screech of brakes after the flappy monsters have lumbered home empty to Italy, free of the Focke-Wulfs and the flak. The story of Ben's sustained dedication—which might so easily have become corny—amid the desolation of the barracks and the fear-ridden, lust-ridden, homesick, tippling, brawling gunners, provides the t-bone of the story. The furious and too-familiar cinema of aerial combat is tossed salad.

Mr. Falstein writes with an artlessness which at first seems uninviting, as strangers in the middle of a conversation seem uninviting, until you've listened a while.

> "It was still dark when all ten of us assembled near our ship in the dispersal area. *The Flying Foxhole* was all shiny and silvery with a taut, unblemished aluminum skin. Nevertheless, I was struck by a change in her appearance. It was not a tangible change. The plane suddenly seemed angry, like a predatory bird."

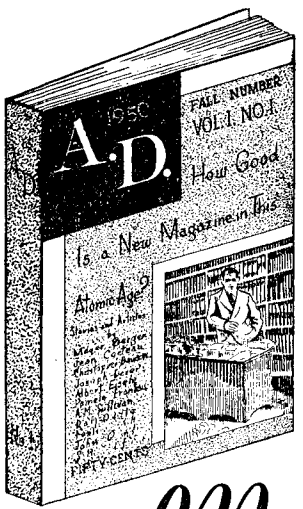
Falstein's insight into the tortures, hopes and anxieties of the gunners is continually arresting. There is unfailingly the Whitmanesque compassion: "I am the man, I suffered, I was there."

If you've been in the Air Force, you'll know how genuine Falstein's air-ground world is. You'll know it is all so genuine even if you've never left your mother's lap. The speech:

". . . even the birds are walking."
". . . you're obscenity well told!"
". . . rough as a cob."

All the sulphurous wit, the glib cynicism, the swaggering disguises of gangling boys who had to become supermen over Ploesti, Vienna, Regensburg, Berlin. Because they were, most of them, undedicated, not knowing why they fought, not caring why, Ben Isaacs knew their courage was exceedingly admirable. Their courage had to feed on the vagueness of drive-in theatres, cokes and hamburgers and some wisp of a girl wearing their silver wings at the USO.

If my name were Brentano or Harcourt Brace, I



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A.D. is a new magazine. (In fact, you can become today an Original Subscriber.) The first number comes off the press this fall.

A.D. is a magazine of distinguished fiction. (If you are tired of the slicks, alergic to the second-rate, A.D. is just your meat.) And it's also a magazine of top-notch comment on contemporary letters and contemporary art. For the present, it will appear quarterly.

A.D. is a magazine of outstanding writers. Evelyn Waugh can't be with us for Vol. 1, No. 1. (He wrote us: "Another baby son born." Which we accept as a proper excuse.) But the line-up, as of now, includes Meyer Berger, Pamela Frankau, Albert Eisele, Joseph Dever, and half a dozen other short-story writers; and, among the poets and the essayists, A. M. Sullivan, Christopher Dawson and Jean Cocteau. The writing ranges from the lovely, to the powerful, to the brilliant. And not a word of it is highbrow.

A.D. is edited by Anne Fremantle and David Marshall, both known to readers of The Commonweal; and by Demetrius Manousos, known as a contributor to America.

How good is a new magazine? We could reply by asking "How high is up?" But instead we reply—modestly, we hope—that A.D. is very good.

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would give away many copies of this book to the returnee gunners I knew in Laredo, Denver, Phoenix. It would make them very happy to know that the whole monstrous business had been set down in a book—a book that explains why teen age gunner veterans beat up three waiters and sob in the darkness on the way up the barrack stairs. As Falstein puts it: ". . . a man does not weep like a child. A man's sobs are the sounds of anguish and despair. They come to the surface with the difficulty of dry heaves."

You close the book reluctantly, gratefully wanting to say: "never, never again." But a wind is rising in Korea and already somebody way up top may be squinting at reactivation plans for Laredo, Tyndall, Kingman, Las Vegas.

Tail gunner to pilot. Over. All over again.

JOE DEVER.

Herman Melville. Newton Arvin. Sloane. $3.50.

AMATEUR psychiatry has become so fashionable in in the literary world that it is increasingly difficult to tell whether one is reading literary criticism or a medical case history. The outnumbered psychiatrists, despite their literary leanings, are being pushed to the wall by an eager horde of critics who are undismayed by their lack of professional qualifications or of all the essential data for a valid analysis, which are rarely available for one long dead. The introspective tendency and the spiritual sickness of our time have led to an extraordinary preoccupation with the introverts and sick souls of American literature, as the plethora of recent studies of Hawthorne, Melville, and James bears witness. And all too often the ills of our own time are projected back into an incompletely known past, to its falsification or misrepresentation.

Newton Arvin's *Herman Melville,* like other volumes in the stimulating new American Men of Letters series, is both a biographical and a critical study, and by definition sets out to probe into the man as well as into his work. Unlike some of the recent Melville books, it does not almost wholly neglect literary criticism in a preoccupation with the dark forest of Melville's personality. In addition to an enriched account of Melville's early life, particularly in the South Seas, Mr. Arvin offers some penetrating analyses of Melville's rhetoric and of other aspects of his literary method. But these fresh and valuable contributions are overshadowed by the mass of psychological analysis. Mr. Arvin evidently felt the necessity to digest and present in absorbed form all the recent pseudo-psychiatric theorizing about Melville. He has performed this task with sympathetic insight and a wisdom which saves him from many of the excesses of younger and more intemperate Melville enthusiasts. But the book is nonetheless topheavy with psychiatric theories for its primary function as a biographical and critical introduction to Melville's work.

It is this reviewer's contention that it is time to call

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a halt to the practice of setting the cart before the horse in literary criticism. Criticism is primarily concerned with the work of art, and only secondarily with the human factors which affected its creation. The contemporary preoccupation with personality, preferably pathological, is so excessive as to lead to neglect of the achievement which makes the personality noteworthy. Too much of what passes for literary criticism today inevitably recalls Roy Campbell's immortal line:

"But where's the bloody horse?"

MASON WADE.

The Counter-Renaissance. Hiram Haydn. Scribner's. $7.50.

THIS learned book, rather overstuffed with quotations and footnotes, offers a good analysis of many literary and philosophic works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially those of Elizabethan England. But in spite of its valuable detail, it is a rather incomplete representation of the period and a very dogmatic one. The author claims that the Renaissance proper is a classical period, but that a great deal of the thought and the belles-lettres of the times is actually romantic in character, opposed to the tendencies of the Renaissance, and therefore must be appropriately classified as "Counter-Renaissance." I am not able to agree with this basic thesis. Every historical period is complex. There are in the same period many strata of emotions, intellectual life and poetical style; rudiments of former periods are still alive, and the embryonic forms of further developments can already be found. I am convinced that in this regard the Renaissance is not very different from other historical movements. I therefore doubt very much whether it makes sense to regard certain unorthodox tendencies of the Renaissance as a new period which can be isolated in such a way as Mr. Haydn attempts to do.

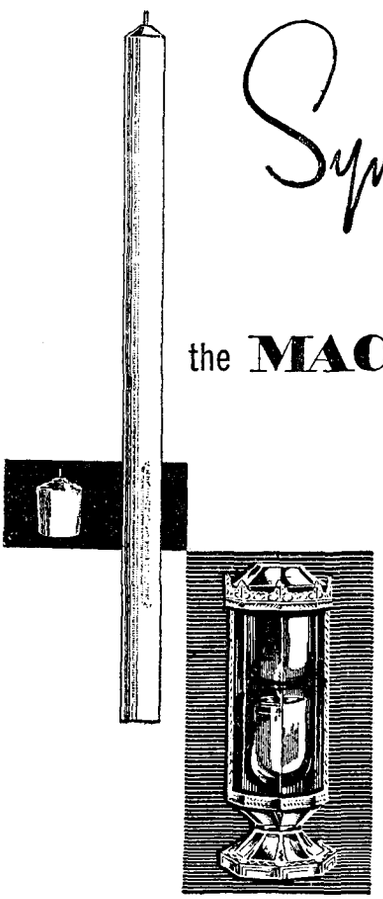
While Haydn deals at great length with the Protestant revolt and its influence on English literature, he is completely disinterested in the Catholic Reform, the so-called Counter-Reformation. A Renaissance personality of the paramount influence of Ignatius of Loyola is only considered as he was distorted by the renegade Donne.

For a reader protected against these arbitrary patterns, the book will prove a source of stimulating knowledge. The author has a considerable understanding of poetic values and his chapters on some of Shakespeare's plays are really enjoyable.

MAX FISCHER.

The Quiet Light. Louis de Wohl. Lippincott. $3.

MR. DE WOHL, though a relatively young man, has been a prolific writer, sixteen of whose earlier novels have been filmed. Since 1948 he has produced a



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series of historical novels with a background of church history, and the fourth of these, *The Quiet Life,* takes as its subject one suggested to the author by Pope Pius XII. It is that of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Nobody will be able to complain that this book lacks color and movement, for it brings in most of the great figures of the thirteenth century, the popes of the times, the Emperor Frederick II and Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, Roger Bacon, St. Louis the King of France, and de Joinville, along with a number of invented characters, who, however, do not as a rule play more than a subsidiary part in the fable.

Perhaps the most serious objection that can be brought against Mr. de Wohl is that he uses—though not nearly to the same extent as Lloyd Douglas in *The Robe* and *The Big Fisherman*—a certain number of inappropriate bits of American slang, made all the quainter by being interlarded with medieval Italian oaths. On the other hand, the author is surprisingly good whenever he touches on theology or philosophy, so far as I can judge. It is true that he makes no pretense of expounding Thomism —and indeed, had he done so he would have made his novel lifeless and dull—but, as the book is, after all, about a philosopher, philosophy has to come in, and at this point Mr. de Wohl handles his material with a skill which both pleased and surprised me.

For one who is looking for a manual of Thomistic philosophy this book will be of little use; but in spite of a few incidental errors and improbabilities, including that of a sixty mile ride made in four hours, the general background is well presented, and the characters have enough life to sustain satisfactorily the action of a novel of this type.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

•REVIEWERS•

JOE DEVER is a novelist and short story writer associated with the CYO in Chicago.

MASON WADE is author of *Margaret Fuller, Whetstone of Genius; The French-Canadian Outlook;* and *The Journals of Francis Parkman.*

MAX FISCHER has been a foreign correspondent in the Far East and foreign editor of *Deutsche Allegemeine Zeitung* in Berlin. He teaches now at the New School for Social Research in New York.

THEODORE MAYNARD is a poet and biographer, author of *Too Small a World, Humanist as Hero, Story of American Catholicism.*

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